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C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 004931

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/10/2007  
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PINR](#) [PINS](#) [PREL](#)  
SUBJECT: DUMA DEPUTIES PROPOSE MISSILE DEFENSE CONFERENCE

Classified By: Political M/C Alice Wells. Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

11. (C) Summary: State Duma Defense Committee Advisor Valeriy Ignatiev confirmed that the Russian State Duma deputies who are members of the Inter-party conference on foreign policy proposed on September 26 that members of the U.S. Congress and parliamentarians from the Czech Republic and Poland meet with their Russian counterparts to discuss the deployment of the proposed missile defense (MD) system in Europe. Neither Post nor the Embassies of the Czech Republic or Poland have received any official notice of this proposal, although GOR has privately discussed the issue with our Polish contacts. The resolution could be adopted the week of October 15. End Summary.

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The Proposal  
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12. (U) The proposal reads in part:

"We ask the parliamentary parties of the United States, the Czech Republic, and Poland to soberly assess the inevitable negative consequences of the planned deployment of elements of the U.S. missile defense system in Europe and to prevent irretrievable steps.

The U.S. plans, if implemented, would open a way toward dangerous violations of strategic stability and would create a threat to security in the world. Our parties will spare no efforts to avoid such a turn of events and make this issue the subject of a serious discussion at reputable international fora."

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No Official Notification Yet  
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13. (C) Our contacts in the Polish Embassy told us that neither the Polish Embassy in Moscow nor the Polish MFA in Warsaw has received any official notification of such a conference from the Russian government. Our Polish contacts added, however, that in private conversations Oleg Burmistrov, Deputy Director of the Russian MFA North America Desk, said that there are several competing plans. In addition to the announced plan for U.S. congressmen and parliamentarians from the Czech Republic and Poland to meet with Russian MPs, another plan would be to invite parliamentarians from all "interested countries," such as Great Britain, France, Germany, and others to the conference. Still another plan would be to invite government officials from the various countries to the conference. No matter what shape the conference would take, our Polish contacts said that they did not think Poland would participate unless all the other invited countries accepted the invitation.

14. (C) Our contacts in the Czech Embassy told us that the Czech government also has not received any official notification of an upcoming MD conference. They speculated that the Czech government would be interested in such a meeting to help settle the differences between the West and Russia.

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An Act of Desperation?  
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15. (C) State Duma Defense Committee Advisor Valeriy Ignatiev told us the proposal was largely an impotent gesture. He said these Duma members simply wanted to demonstrate to their constituents that they are trying to do something about U.S. plans to place a missile defense system in Europe. Ignatiev opined that the proposal is unlikely to gain traction in the State Duma.

16. (C) Aleksandr Belkin, Deputy Executive Director of the Council of Foreign and Defense Policy, also characterized the move as one of desperation. Arguing that "Russia feels like a neglected child who starts fires in the corner of a room to get attention," Belkin said Russia does not believe that it can stop U.S. plans for deploying an MD system in Europe. He predicted that if the Duma deputies' proposed meeting did take place, Russia would use it to ask the Europeans to reconsider their support for MD. Belkin reiterated that Russia objects strongly to placing an MD system in Poland because of the often-strained relations between the two countries. He argued that Russia would have fewer objections if MD rockets were placed in Hungary rather than Poland.  
Burns